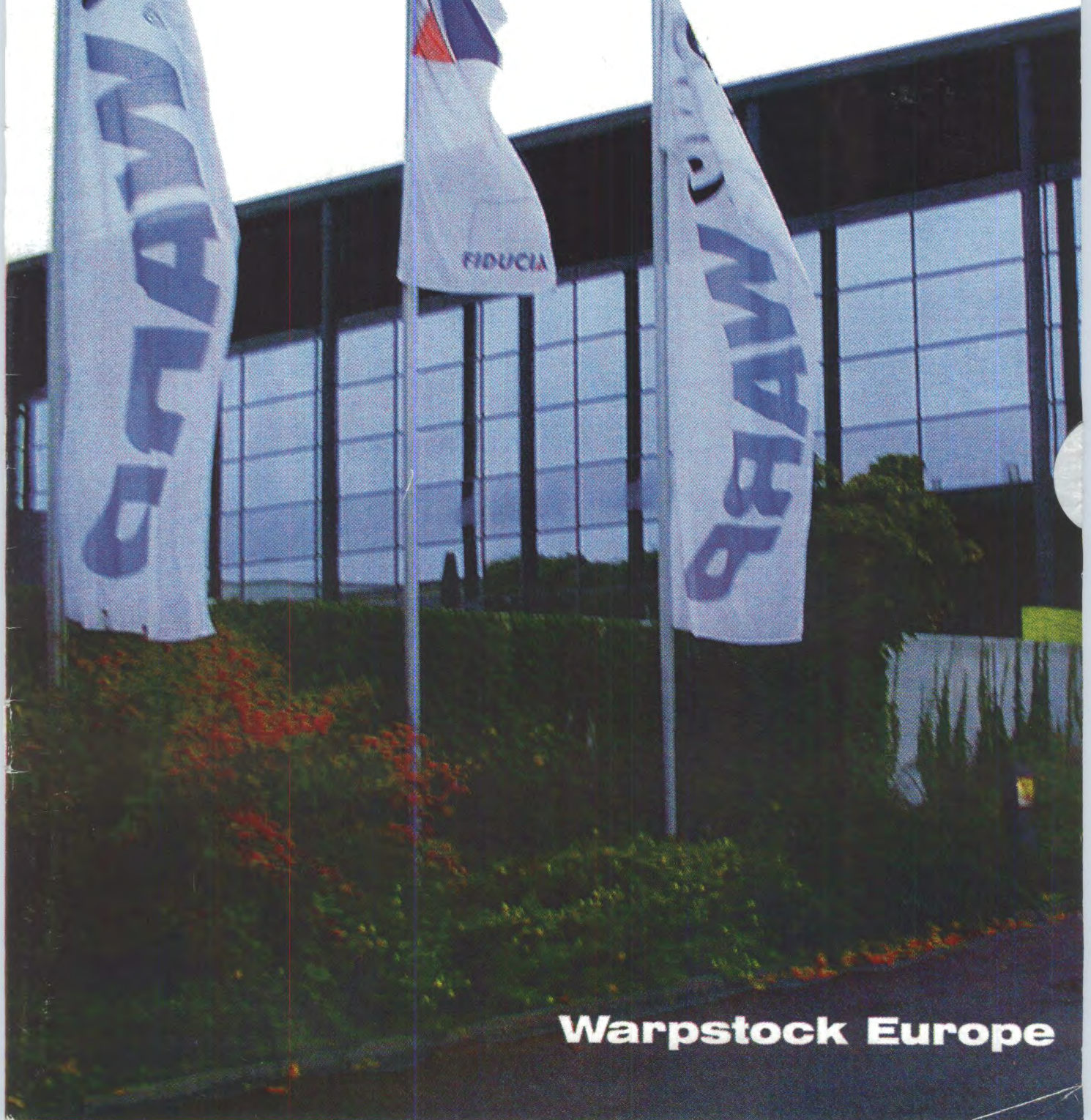


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# extended attributes

The magazine of the OS/2 community



**Warpstock Europe**



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# Waiting for IBM (or someone like them)

by Bill Schindler, Editor-in-chief

When I was at Warpstock Europe, three different people asked me to pass on the same request to American OS/2 users. The short version of the request was: Tell the Americans to quit waiting for IBM.

From the European viewpoint, many Americans are waiting for IBM to do something for OS/2. Waiting for IBM to produce a new OS/2 client, waiting for IBM to produce some applications, and waiting for IBM to wake up and support OS/2.

In contrast, the Europeans and Russians are writing code, porting applications, and even discussing how to keep OS/2 going with minimal IBM involvement. They've long since quit waiting for IBM.

If you want to know about some of the things they're doing, look at the list of projects on the Net Labs Web site ([www.netlabs.org](http://www.netlabs.org)) or check out one of the Russian sites. Or take a look at the majority of new programs uploaded to Hobbes ([hobbes.nmsu.org](http://hobbes.nmsu.org)).

While many American OS/2 users are waiting, many of the folks on the other side of the Atlantic are *doing* something. The Europeans are even planning for the future. For example, when the open source Watcom C++ compiler was announced, a few Americans on discussion lists explained that porting the compiler to OS/2 would be too complex. Meanwhile, the Europeans were getting directly

involved to ensure that an OS/2 version is available at the same time as other platforms.

OS/2 is alive and well outside of the United States. OS/2 is alive and well primarily due to the efforts of people whose individual efforts combine to produce something far greater than what IBM has done for OS/2 in five years.

It's time for American OS/2 users to realize that it's IBM that is dead—not OS/2.

## Magazine status

A quick glance at the table of contents proves that our several plaintive cries for help have brought some responses. (And some darn good responses at that!) A *huge* thank you goes to everyone who has helped get us out of the content pit.

But, we're not out of the woods, yet. There's not enough articles coming in to push us back to a monthly schedule. So, if you're thinking of writing an article, it's still wanted!

While you're thinking about writing an article, consider writing a review. In this issue, Esther has written a guide to writing reviews, so you can get up to speed quickly. Need something to review? Send an email to our reviews editor, Craig Greenwood <[reviews@possi.org](mailto:reviews@possi.org)>, and tell him you're interested and available. ☺

## Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc

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President **Dick Krueger** [president@possi.org](mailto:president@possi.org)  
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 Board member **Julian Thomas** [jt@epix.net](mailto:jt@epix.net)  
 Board member **Chuck McKinnis** [mckinnis@attglobal.net](mailto:mckinnis@attglobal.net)  
 Membership **Evelyn Hitch** [hitch@attglobal.net](mailto:hitch@attglobal.net)

Editor-in-chief **Bill Schindler** [editor@possi.org](mailto:editor@possi.org)  
 Asst editor **Esther Schindler** [esther@bitranch.com](mailto:esther@bitranch.com)  
 Reviews editor **Craig Greenwood** [reviews@possi.org](mailto:reviews@possi.org)  
 SIG news editor **Ernie Fisch** [ernfisch@indirect.com](mailto:ernfisch@indirect.com)  
 Contributing editors **David Both, Joel Frey, Craig Greenwood, David Wei, Alan Zeichick**  
 Temp ad manager **B Schindler** [editor@possi.org](mailto:editor@possi.org)

Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc  
 5515 N 7th St, PMB 5-133  
 Phoenix, AZ 85014-2531  
 Voice mail: 602-420-5334  
 Web: <http://www.possi.org>

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# Warpstock Europe 2000

photos by Bill & Esther Schindler



Above left: Bob St John, Oliver Mark, and Kim Cheung discuss eComStation.

Above right: A few of the people on the Odin team.

Left: Deep discussions and mystic hand signals at the POSSI booth.



Left: The registration line snakes out the door.

Below: Daniela Engert of "Dani's drivers" fame.



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# Let's review!

## How to write a product review

by Esther Schindler

What's the most important way that most people find out about which new products to buy, and which to avoid? Whether it's groceries, minivans, or software, the opinion of respected friends and colleagues is number one. After word-of-mouth comes impartial product reviews in professional and user-group magazines. And that includes *extended attributes*.

I should know: I've been writing product reviews professionally for about eight years, and nearly twice as long if I count my contributions to user-group newsletters since the mid-80s.

So why am I talking about this, and what does this have to do with OS/2?

I have several reasons to share my skill with you. First, *extended attributes* is always in need of product reviews (as Craig Greenwood, our long-suffering reviews editor, can attest). Plenty of people say they're willing to contribute to the magazine, but they're intimidated by the prospect of reviewing software, and they don't know how to go about it. (We do promise novices that *extended attributes* has three professional editors standing by, ready to make your text look good. But that doesn't help when you aren't sure what to say, in the first place)

So, my clearest reason for explaining how to write a review is simply to inspire you and to help you write one for this magazine. And the more OS/2 product reviews that the Phoenix OS/2 Society can provide, the more valuable we'll be to each other.

However, that's not the only reason for you to read this article. Even if you're sure that you'd never contribute a review for a user group magazine, there are more reasons for you to understand the review process.

First, you may need to evaluate a product for your business or your customers. Your own firm may need to compare products, and these instructions may assist you in organizing the process. Or, you might be curious about how professionals go about the process of evaluating software, where those "Editor's Choices" come from, and how the products get judged. Finally, you might want to write a review for another venue: a user group magazine, e-zine, or just your Web site.

### The reviewer's attitude

The most important component in a writer's toolbox is her attitude. At all times, you need to keep in mind that you're writing for the reader. Not for yourself. Not for the vendor. Not for the editor.

It's the reader who matters, and ultimately it's *only* the reader who matters. Some poor schnook is out there, listening to your advice, and deciding how to spend his money based on what you say. It's your job to give that reader the most useful advice you can, based on your expertise in the subject area, a thorough understanding of the reader's needs, and how well this product serves those needs. If you can keep this attitude in your head, your article will be valuable even if it's poorly organized or awkwardly written.

However, it's a common error—particularly for new reviewers—to think that "the reader" is the same as "me." This process isn't about *your* needs. It's about *your readers'* needs.

That means you have to understand who the reader is, what he cares about, what problems he struggles with. A home user setting up her first network has different concerns than your IT manager boss, who's responsible for supporting 1,000 end-users. Those two computer users have a different level of technical knowledge, too, so you'll have to explain technical features in a different way to each of them.

Sometimes, you can find out "who's the reader?" simply by asking the editor who assigned you the article. In professional publications, the editor has a very clear idea of which readers they target, which makes life easier for freelancers (at least those thoughtful enough to ask). User group publications are muddier because the membership is "anybody interested in PCs" or "any OS/2 user," but even for *extended attributes*, we have a reasonably clear picture. For instance, if you write for this magazine you should assume that the reader has been using OS/2 for 3-5 years and is familiar with the basics by now, even if he isn't savvy about every feature in detail.

That's not to say that the product you're reviewing is suitable only for one reader. Almost every computer user needs, say, a word processor, but some packages are more appropriate for lawyers and others are best suited to new users. While you examine the package, you should ask yourself, "For which readers is this suitable?" Part of "serve the reader" is to point out which users would appreciate this product's features. A product that's a great value for a home user may be irrelevant to a corporate user, but that doesn't make it bad.

Also, keep in mind that every product exists in a context. What is it? What other products claim to solve the same problem? If there are 100 ftp clients for OS/2 (and it sure seems that way), what's different about this one? Why



did the software developer decide that the 99 other applications available weren't suitable, and spend the time writing this one instead? In a crowded marketplace, oftentimes you don't need to describe what a product is, as much as you need to explain what makes it different from its competition. ("Nothing much" is an all-too-common answer.)

## The essential questions

Every review must answer these questions:

- What does the product promise?
- How well does it achieve those goals?
- Is it a good value? for whom?

Everything else is just details.

The same rules apply to a restaurant review or an evaluation of stereo equipment. The rules apply whether the review is ten pages long or whether it's contained in a single sentence ("That new Ethiopian restaurant was disappointing, because the food quality wasn't up to the prices").

## Evaluating the product

Before you write the review, naturally you first have to evaluate the product. Assuming that we're talking primarily about software reviews, at the moment, here's some of the steps you should take.

Obviously, you need to install and use the software in whatever seems like the ordinary manner. At first, you can use it the way you would personally, but always keep the reader's concerns in mind. At first, follow the directions and create simple projects (the proverbial "hello world" application, flow chart, or other result), and gradually get more complex.

Read the documentation. I realize that this is anathema for a lot of technical users (particularly those who seem to be tapped for a review at work, because of their expertise), but when you're writing a review it is entirely necessary. You need to understand everything the product can do (or at least what it promises to do), not just use the features that appeal to you personally.

(Remember that part about staying aware of what your reader cares about?) Plus, you can't put yourself in the position of reporting that an application lacks a feature, only to have the vendor sadly respond, "It's documented right there on page 42!"

While you explore the features, look at what the product does—and also look at what the product doesn't do. It's easy to get lost in the feature chart of promises, and to become distracted from the necessary tasks that the product lacks.

For both yourself and your reader, note the difference between the features that are "need to have" versus those that are "neat to have." (Okay, so this lawnmower cuts the grass with a laser and has a connection to the Internet. Why would anybody need such a feature?) How well do these features address the problem to be solved?

## Types of reviews

Finally, you have a good sense of what the product does and doesn't do, and you have an opinion about its value for your readers. How do you present the information?

There are a few standard types of reviews. A stand-alone product review examines one item only, and doesn't pay very much attention to the other products on the market. It simply examines how well this product solves the problem, and answers, "Is this good?" not "Is this better?"

On the other hand, a comparative review answers the question, "which of these products solves the problem best?" Comparative reviews are common when several products offer the same basic functionality (making the variations the important component) and when a user is apt to purchase only one of such an item (such as a DVD player or a flowchart application).

A technology overview can look like a comparative review, but they're generally not as evaluative or as exhaustive. Rather than saying whether a product is good or better than its competitors, a technology overview describes different ways to

approach a problem, with products described as example solutions. These are becoming more prevalent as some product categories increase in complexity. It's nearly impossible to do a fair review of any package that requires its users to spend two months in class before generating a "hello world" result—such categories include applications like enterprise-class e-commerce development tools and customer relationship software.

There are two other article categories that are not really reviews, but are sometimes treated as such (particularly by readers who take exception to the contents): opinion columns and product announcements.

Product announcements, like the "New and Improved" pages here in *extended attributes*, merely say that the product exists. If there's any qualitative statement, it's attributed to the vendor ("According to the company, this is the fastest...").

While it's gratifying when opinion articles (particularly in the computer press) are based on personal experience and factual tire-kicking, that's not always the case and not necessarily required. An opinion column represents one individual's point of view, after all, which can be completely one-sided.

## A review's structure

Finally, you're ready to actually set pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard. If you've done your research well, this is the easiest part of the process—at least for me. I can spend weeks evaluating a product, but it rarely takes me more than an hour to write the actual text. This isn't only because I love to write. Reviews have a very clear structure, with few variations.

First, you write an introductory paragraph. The lead paragraph (what journalists call a "lede," which is the word "lead" misspelled so that proofreaders will be likely to catch it) states the problem to be solved, and introduces the product as a possible



solution. The introductory paragraph (sometimes spilling to a second one) also provides a one sentence summary: Did you like it? Is it disappointing? Provide no details, here, just the summary.

Writing an effective lede is the subject of many books on creative writing. For our purposes, let's just note that a lede needs to capture the reader's interest and give him a clue about the article's contents.

In the main body of the review, you describe what the product does, and how it works. While you can show your appreciation or disapproval of the features and process here, the underlying intent is to describe "what it promises."

Then, go into detail about what you like, and what you dislike. Though it's common for new reviewers to switch back-and-forth between the likes and dislikes (perhaps they think it sounds more fair), readers usually expect the praise to precede the criticism.

Finally, summarize your opinion, with a strong conclusion. Tell someone with certainty: is this worth the money? Don't waffle; the reader has made it this far through your article because he wants to know if this product is worth his money. At heart: if this was your money, would you buy this product? Tell the reader so, and explain why.

In addition to the main body of text, your review can contain other article components, such as screen shots, box shots, feature charts, the "About this product" box, a short bio (that says why you're qualified to offer judgements on a product like this), and other article components. Ask your editor what he expects, and in what format. As a minimum, you should supply the product name, version you evaluated, full company name, the list price, and the company's URL.

## Common mistakes

There are many mistakes common to new reviewers. I'll point out a few, so you can avoid them in your own articles.

Avoid irrelevant introductions. Alan Zeichick, *extended attributes'* long suffering contributing editor (and longtime computer industry journalist), calls this the "First, the earth cooled..." phenomenon. ("First, the earth cooled. Then the dinosaurs came, and they got too big so they died out, and then came the mammals, and mammals invented ftp clients.") Beginners tend to provide lots of history and context at the start of a review, and most of the time it's unnecessary.

Another common mistake is to recite the feature list. Don't do this. It's boring, and it adds no value to the reader. Why should they care if the Gargleblaster has X, Y, and Z? How does that help the product deliver on its promise, or fail to do so?

If you must provide me with a long list of features, create a separate chart with checkboxes. Otherwise, tell me only about the features that are worth knowing about—because they're exceptionally good, poorly implemented, or simply unique and interesting.

Also, don't give me a tour of the installation process: "I put the disk in Drive A and typed INSTALL, and then explained that I would like to have the program installed in the C:\MYFILES directory." Don't mention specifics about the installation process unless there's something significantly wrong with the automated scripts or the vendors's instructions.

## Above all, be honest

Keep in mind that, just because you got the product free, it doesn't mean that it's a gift, and that you should thank the vendor by providing a thumbs-up review. Remember: it's not the vendor's "gift" that matters. It's the reader, who is a user-group member just like you. You're telling someone how to spend her money, and it's your duty to answer the question, "Would you spend your own hard-earned cash on this thing?"

Your relationship with the product's vendor has no part in the words you put in the

review. I've heard user group members say, "But they were so nice to me!" as a reason for writing an undeserved positive review. But by now you're familiar with my refrain: *it's your fellow user-group members who matter*. Of course, it's in the vendor's interest to be nice to you and to enable you to review the product (such as providing it to you in the first place); but it's not the vendor you're serving.

## Be brief. Unlike me.

When you write, keep in mind the King's advice to Alice in Wonderland: Start at the beginning. Go on until you reach the end. And then stop.

I've certainly gone into a great deal of detail here—though I worry about the points I left out—but at long last, I think I've given you enough basics that you can feel comfortable in writing a review. If you write a review for *extended attributes*, I'll feel as though the exercise was a success. ☺

Esther Schindler is Senior Editor at PlanetIT.com, where she now edits reviews written by freelance writers. Formerly, Esther was technology editor at *Sm@rt Partner* magazine, senior contributing editor at *OS/2 Magazine*, and technical editor at *Visual Developer* magazine. Esther's written several hundred product reviews for publications as diverse as *PC Magazine*, *Computerworld*, and *Computer Shopper*, and many of those reviews were about OS/2 applications. You can reach her at [esther@bitranch.com](mailto:esther@bitranch.com).



# The Webalizer

## A free resource for OS/2 webmasters

by John Sandercock

OS/2 is a great platform for building Web sites. Previous articles in extended attributes have described OS/2 Web servers, HTML editors, graphics editors, firewalls, ftp clients, and HTML validators. All the tools you need to create, maintain and browse Web sites are available under OS/2—which is as it should be, because the Web has been good to OS/2 users.

Another useful Web utility, which has been ported to OS/2, is Webalizer, written by Bradford L. Barrett ([brad@mrunix.net](mailto:brad@mrunix.net)), distributed under the GNU General Public License, and compiled for OS/2 by [ABlankerts@freepoint.de](mailto:ABlankerts@freepoint.de). Webalizer analyzes and presents (in tables and graphs) a tremendous amount of information which Apache and other Web servers routinely capture, but which is extremely tedious to sift through without such a tool.

Webalizer was designed to be run from a Unix command line prompt or as a cron job. In its OS/2 incarnation, Webalizer is a text-mode native OS/2 application. It requires the EMX Libs of Version 0.9d or later. Several command line options can modify the results, and configuration files can be used, but the default settings provide a great deal of useful information.

The format of the command line (in the English OS/2 version) is:  
`webalizer.exe.en [options ...] [log-file]`

For me, using Webalizer is a three-step operation. First, I transfer `access_log` via ftp from the Apache server to my local PC. The file is deposited in the directory where I installed The Webalizer. Then I run  
`webalizer.exe.en access_log`  
from an OS/2 window, which takes less than two seconds. Finally, I open Netscape to view the results of the analysis.

By default, Webalizer produces an HTML file for each month in which activity was logged, and a summary file with hyperlinks to the more detailed monthly files. The summary file created from the access log file shows daily averages and monthly totals of hits, files, pages, and visits.

It also shows monthly totals of kilobytes transferred. The monthly files show, in addition, daily and hourly hits, pages and visits, totals of every response code generated by the server, the top 30 URLs served, the top 10 entry and exit pages, and the top 30 addresses to access the server.

Webalizer can be downloaded from <ftp://webalizer.dexa.org/pub/webalizer/webalizer-1.30-04-os2-intel-bin.zip> or from Hobbes in the <pub/os2/apps/internet/www/util> directory. Look for `webalizer-1.30-04-os2-intel.bin.zip` (and the `msfree.gif` inside the zip file.) The zip file unpacks two executables, one in English and one in German. ☺

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# The case for open source

by David Both

both warped

The open source movement has become all the rage in the last few years because of Linux' success. Some folks think it might be the salvation of OS/2.

Because Linux does not use code from any versions of Unix, there is no need to charge license fees for its use when it is redistributed. The fact that it was developed by a student for students and the academic community placed Linux squarely in an environment where free distribution of the software seemed a natural thing to do. So Linux and its source code was put up on the Internet where it was—and is—freely available to anyone who wants it. This is called *open source*.

## CopyLeft

Just because Linux and its source code are freely available does not mean that no legal or copyright issues are involved. Linux is copyrighted under the GNU General Public License (GPL). The GNU GPL is sometimes called a *copyleft* because its terms are significantly different from most commercial licenses. The terms of the GPL allow you to redistribute or even to sell copylefted software, but you must provide the complete source code as well as the compiled binaries. The original developer of Linux (Linus Torvalds, for the Linux kernel) retains copyright to the software no matter who or how much it is modified or added to.

The freedom here is not that the software is free; it may, in fact, cost a great deal. Although the distributions may be downloaded at no charge, Red Hat and other companies all charge for packaged versions of their respective distributions of Linux. Most companies that produce application software for Linux charge for it as well. (Indeed, some of this software is extremely costly, at least to those of us who use income from a day job to finance our purchases. I have been trying to justify the cost of Lotus Domino for Linux, and can't bring myself to spend that much money. So I keep using Domino for OS/2 to run my Web site.)

The real freedom in open source software is that the source code is available. Any user with the requisite knowledge can modify the source code and recompile the application or the operating system kernel and make it do whatever he or she needs it to do.

The only requirement placed on anyone who modifies and redistributes the code, whether they give it away or sell it, is that they must also provide the modified source code. This allows everyone who obtains and uses that code to make their own changes and pass it on.

This is Darwinian evolution for software. The best modifications become embedded in the product through the

natural selection process of the marketplace and they in turn become part of the basis for additional mutations.

## Final Warp

I have lately seen many OS/2 users calling for IBM to make the OS/2 source code available as open source. Making OS/2 open source would in their opinion and mine revitalize OS/2 to the point of becoming a viable operating system choice once more. IBM has so much invested in OS/2 that it would be criminal to waste it all and just drop the best PC operating system there has ever been.

My sources inside IBM tell me that virtually nothing is being done with OS/2. So, making OS/2 open source would seem to be the ideal situation for OS/2 users. IBM should just make the operating system open source and let the user community continue to enhance it.

It will never happen.

I hope IBM proves me wrong.

Unfortunately, IBM will not make OS/2 open source, because they are too deeply entrenched on a path to the slow fade out of OS/2. IBM has adopted too many operating systems to continue with OS/2 for longer than the five years that Lou Gerstner promised, almost five years ago. There will not even be any final credits for us to remember those who have contributed so much to OS/2 over the years.

Of course, IBM may not be able to make OS/2 open source, even if it wanted to. For example, most people do not realize that there is still some Microsoft code in all versions of OS/2, and there is certainly no way that Microsoft will allow their code to go open source.

The only way that Linux has made it this far is through the efforts of Linus Torvalds and many others who have written and rewritten their own code and made it into the powerful force it has become. This is my challenge to the users of OS/2 who want to see OS/2 open sourced! Do what Linus did: Build it yourself. The only way to get away from the incredible ineptitude at IBM is to build our own version of OS/2, from the ground up. Who cares then whether IBM lets their version of OS/2 die? What difference could it possibly make what IBM decides to do?

This is what many OS/2 users have been asking for in one way or another for years. Give us OS/2 to do with as we please!

Do I hear any volunteers out there? ☹



# A CompuServe guide for OS/2 users

by Samuel Little

feature

One great thing about OS/2 user communities is that, despite little encouragement, in one form or another they seem to stick around. In the early days, when the Internet was barely a blip on the general computer community's radar screen, the main source for OS/2 news, discussion and files were the OS/2 Forums on CompuServe Interactive Services, Inc. (then CIS—now CompuServe, Inc., or CS, and owned by America Online).

## What's so good about Forums?

CompuServe Forums are discrete areas dedicated to some general subject area. They encompass three basic services: message areas, file libraries, and live discussion. There are up to 24 message and library sections per Forum, allowing for additional categorization within the general subject. For instance, the IBM Forum has separate sections for desktop systems, laptops, servers, Via Voice software, and several sections dedicated to OS/2.

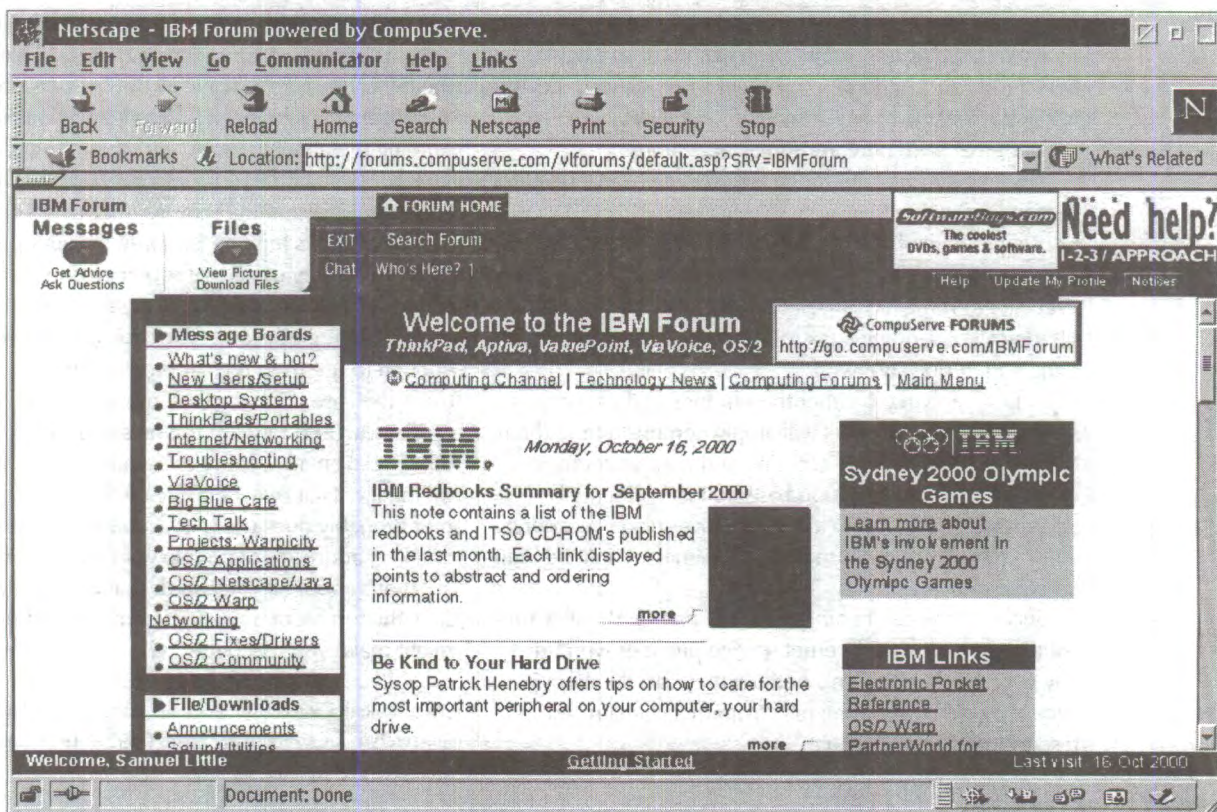
There is a basic set of CompuServe terms of use, and Forums may add a few policies of their own. Typical restrictions are the use of strong language, commercial

advertising in messages, and personal attacks on other members.

Forums have a staff, who are usually volunteers. They're known as SysOps, which means "systems operators," a hold-over term from the electronic bulletin-board days, when sysops managed hardware as well as content. SysOps and WizOps (a wizard-level SysOp, with extra administrative privileges) have access to management tools regular members don't, such as the ability to block users, delete files from the download directory, move messages to different discussion topics, and rename Forum sections.

SysOps do their best to keep Forums running smoothly. They might move message threads to more appropriate sections, split or rename message trees when "thread drift" takes over, check files for viruses before allowing users to download them, and occasionally move messages that break CS or Forum rules out of public view.

Back in the days of company-sponsored support Forums, SysOps also typically had special knowledge in the area they covered, but now it's usually only safe to assume that they have an interest in the subject.





While files become available only after a SysOp has cleared it, messages become "live" immediately, so sometimes "bad" messages slip through until a SysOp has a chance to see and react to it, but usually such problems are few and far between. Notably, CompuServe Forums rarely have the sort of "flame" (abuse email—the name comes from "spreading more heat than light") problems that Usenet is famous for—not that friendly disagreement and lively discussion are discouraged!

The net result is that CS Forums are generally friendly, organized places for getting problems resolved, catching up on the latest news, grabbing needed files, or just chewing the fat.

### OS/2 resources

In OS/2's heyday, there were separate CompuServe Forums for OS/2 end-users, support questions (one for peer support and one surcharged Forum for support from IBM), developers (two Forums), and vendors (one for commercial and one for share-

ware). There was even a separate German OS/2 Forum.

Times have changed, particularly in the online world, and CompuServe was slow to pick up on what was going on around it. As more people discovered the Web, vendors switched from support Forums on CS to Web sites, email, and Usenet, where anybody on any ISP could get access. Perhaps these tools weren't better than CompuServe's Forum architecture, but they were widely available.

---

## Want to make \$50,000 in the next 30 days?

by Alan Zeichick

If you're like me, you probably get lots and lots of unwanted commercial bulk email—known as spam—at both your business and personal email accounts. It's unavoidable. There's nothing you can do to stop it. The best thing you can do when you get spam is just to delete it... and expect to spend some time every day doing so.

With that said, here are some suggestions.

First: *Never ever respond to the spammer.* That includes responding to them with the word "remove" in the email, or using the email address that they claim that is there for that purpose. It also means that you shouldn't visit their Web site to remove yourself from their list, or make a phone call or sending a fax to request that they stop bothering you. It does not work!

In fact, replying to either the sender's address or their special "remove" address will amply demonstrate to them that yours is a live email account, you read your email closely, and you take action based on it. Your email address will be added to a list of "active sucker" accounts, and sold for a premium to more spammers. You'll be inundated.

Second: *You can complain to the spammer's ISP.* Complaining to your own Internet service provider won't do any good, because there's nothing they can do about it except block all incoming mail from that domain, and no responsible ISP will do that.

If the spam comes from a well-known public ISP, like hotmail.com, yahoo.com, aol.com, email.com, earthlink.com and so-on, you can forward the complete message to [webmaster@aol.com](mailto:webmaster@aol.com) or [abuse@aol.com](mailto:abuse@aol.com) (or whatever the ISP is). Be sure to leave all the headers on the message. You'll generally get back a form letter thanking you for sending the email to them, and promising to take action.

What will the ISP do? Generally, they'll shut down the spammer's account. Of course, that won't do any good. Most spammers register for a free account on one of those services, or they use a trial subscription. They use the account for one spam blast only, and never use the account again. But sometimes the spammers will be stupid enough to use their regular email account. If it looks like that's the case, I forward the message to the webmaster.

You can also forward the message to the webmaster of the special email account the spammer claims will take you off the list. That may be more effective, because the spammer probably does use that account, to harvest those "sucker" addresses of people who sent a "remove" request.

That's about all you can do, unfortunately. You won't slow the torrent of unwanted commercial bulk email, but it might make you feel better. ☹

Alan Zeichick was co-founder and editor of *OS/2 Magazine*, and currently is the editor of *SD Times* ([www.sdtimes.com](http://www.sdtimes.com)). You can reach him at [alan@bzmedia.com](mailto:alan@bzmedia.com).



IBM was amongst the vendors who chose to leave CompuServe, but fortunately, Larry Finkelstein's Creative Systems Programming Corp. agreed to manage the suite of IBM-related Forums mainly as peer-support resources. Larry had already started the independent OS/2 Central Forum, and may be familiar to you as one of the directors of Warpstock.

Over the last few years, however, CompuServe has been doing some remodeling and reorganizing. In addition to the decade-old, proprietary Host-Micro Interface (HMI), Forums are now accessible through standard Internet protocols. Even better, as mentioned in the July issue of *extended attributes*, Forums are now open to non-CompuServe subscribers! (Note: this applies primarily to Forums operating under US-based contracts. As of this writing, CS Germany is testing open Forums; in other areas, Forums are still open only to CS subscribers.)

At the same time, CS decided that there were too many overlapping Forums and started a program to close or merge well over a thousand Forums into a few hundred. Although this didn't sit well with many members, many reasons for having lots of Forums (like the message "scroll rate," where incoming messages push the oldest messages out) had been mitigated through migration to new Forum infrastructure and a decline in Forum activity. As part of this move, all IBM-related Forums were combined into a single IBM Forum.

### Great! How do I get there?

Before I answer that, let's talk a bit about what you need first. CompuServe Forums use a lot of different technologies, including Java, JavaScript, and cookies. Netscape Navigator 4.61 is highly recommended, as some of the JavaScript fails under v4.04 (let alone v2.02). JavaScript must be enabled in the browser, Java is necessary for live discussion and may be used on Forum homepages, and allowing cookies is highly

recommended to make it easier to use the Forums.

It's actually easier to get into Forums under OS/2 than Windows, because there are fewer technology variables to worry about. For a while, CompuServe required a Microsoft technology called Remote Password Authentication (RPA, or Virtual Key) which used special hooks into Netscape (Windows only) or Internet Explorer (Windows and Mac), but RPA and public access tend to trip over each other as CompuServe tries to support both technologies.

The next thing you need is a Screen Name and password. A Screen Name is either a CompuServe numeric ("classic") ID or any ID from the AOL namespace: a CompuServe 2000 or AOL name or one of the Instant Messenger IDs (AOL, CompuServe, Netscape). If you belong to

Netscape's NetCenter, that ID should also work as it, too, has been moved to AOL's namespace. If you don't have a Screen Name yet, though, it's easy enough to set one up on your way into the Forum.

Finally: start Netscape and enter the following URL: <http://go.compuserve.com/IBMForum?loc=us&access=public>. The "loc=us" parameter overrides your Netscape nationalization settings (Edit, Preferences, Navigator, Languages), which is necessary because only the United States view of the Forums support public access at this time. Even if your browser is set for US English (EN-us), it doesn't hurt to leave it there.

You'll be taken to a secure login screen. Enter your Screen Name and password here. The "remember my password" stores your login information in a cookie, so use



this option carefully. If you don't have your Screen Name yet, simply click where it says to "Get your Free Screen Name now." You may need to be either creative or flexible; tens of millions of names are already in use in the namespace. The length of the name was recently increased from 12 to 16 characters, so longer names are more likely to be available. And keep in mind that, within a Forum, there is a separate "Forum Name" you can change to something more reasonable than whatever ID you happen to end up with.

Once you have your Screen Name set up (or have entered it in the login window), you'll receive one or two messages that you are being redirected to an unsecure page on another server. One of these messages you can't avoid; the other you have the option of turning off. Simply continue through these dialogs and the Forum homepage will start to load.

A note on privacy: within a Forum, members are known only by Forum Name and Screen Name. The email address you provided when getting your Screen Name is known by the Forum software (it is used by the waiting message notification and the reply to email options), but the address is not made available to members (other than WizOps), so your email address cannot be harvested for spam lists through Forums.

### Okay, I'm there. Now what?

All Forums have an access bar across the top and a status area across the bottom. What appears in the middle is up to the Forum operators and can contain almost anything: typically, links to recent news, hot or new discussions and files, and so on. Because of the variable nature of this area

I'll limit my discussion to navigation from the top bar... but don't let this stop you from exploring on your own!

First, I'll briefly mention the advertising. As with nearly anything that's "free" on the Web, there are ads, but these are quite small and generally load quickly. Be tolerant of them... perhaps even check them out once in a while, as they are generally the only revenue source for the folks who keep the Forums going.

Now let's look at the small buttons underneath the banner ads. **Help** is rather obvious. **Update My Profile** allows you to change your Forum name (it's recommended that you use your real name here) or enter a brief statement about your interests. Your Screen Name stays the same, but if you don't want to be referred to as BigDaddyDan17683 or whatever, you can choose something more to your liking here. **Notices** provide access to some standard Forum-specific information, such as when conferences (a bit like IRC) are held, library and message section descriptions, a list of SysOps, and so on.

Sometimes, after resizing your Netscape window, the functionality of these buttons will be lost. Using Netscape's **Reload** button should get things back in order—or exit and reenter the Forum.

The **Messages** and **Files** buttons on the top-left bring you to the meat of the Forum. Clicking on either of these buttons will display pages with section lists and message (or file) counts, along with various related tools, such as search, display options. The button itself splits into links into related pages.

To the right of the **Files** button are (usually) a collection of five buttons. **Forum Home** always takes you back to the Forum home page. **Exit** usually takes you to CompuServe's home page. **Search Forum** lets you look for messages, files, or member records (which is handy if you want to send a message to someone in particular).

The last two buttons, **Chat** and **Who's Here**, are linked to CompuServe's Java Chat applet, and only appear if Java is enabled. When the IBM Forum page is loaded, this 250KB applet is automatically downloaded and started (though autoload is configurable on a Forum-by-Forum basis and will be stored in Netscape's cache for a while).

**Who's Here** tells you how many members are currently in the Forum, and clicking on the button provides you with a list of users. The **Chat** button provides access to the various live chat features of the Forum.

That's enough to get you started. I'll cover more on messaging, libraries, and chat features in the next issue. ☺

Samuel Little has worked for Gale Group or its predecessors since 1982. He joined CompuServe in 1991 and probably wouldn't have loaded OS/2 v2.1 in 1993 if it weren't for the OS/2 Forums there. In 1995 he took up his "SysOp wand" to help people with questions about Wales and the Welsh in the UK Forum and the odd OS/2 and DOS question in the UK Information Technology Forum... even though he's a California native.



# e-Parenting book review

by Sheila Greenwood

For anyone raising children in this computer age, *Teach Yourself e-Parenting Today* can be a great resource. It juxtaposes parental wisdom with the Internet and computers. And it does so in a beneficial way for both parents who are new to computers, and parents who already know their way around the net.

This book provides information on how to get involved with your children and their use of your home computer, as opposed to turning your kids over to what could become today's electronic nanny. The book lists dozens of recommended Web sites that can make your e-parenting more effective.

Over the course of several chapters, the text covers PC and Internet use to nurture creative problem solving and self esteem, to enhance people skills, and to teach discipline and responsibility. Other chapters deal with online resources for schooling and for parenting, Internet safety for online kids, and saving family traditions in new ways.

I found the tutorial style format easy to read, and I like that it offers opportunities for hands on learning with the child. Throughout each chapter the authors share insights about effective parenting and

relate it to the modern computer/Internet as a teaching medium.

I was glad to see that the authors encourage parental involvement and give specific guidance as to how to go about doing this. I also that they compiled all the Web sites, mentioned in each of the chapters, into an appendix, for easy reference.

Another useful appendix, "A Brief Guide to Child Development," aids a parent in knowing what to expect from their child at different ages from two to sixteen, physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.

**Teach Yourself e-Parenting Today**  
by Evelyn Petersen and Karin Petersen  
\$17.99

SAMS Publishing  
[www.mcp.com/sams](http://www.mcp.com/sams)



This book would be a good addition to any family's library. It also would be a great gift idea for someone who is apprehensive about using the computer and who might be unsure about how to help their child make the most of their time on the computer without becoming enslaved to it. ☺

Sheila Greenwood is a homemaker, mother of three and wife of one. She has been using OS/2 since her husband introduced her to it in the early nineties.

## Joining the discussion

The Phoenix OS/2 Society runs a private unmoderated email discussion list. In the 20 to 40 messages posted daily, OS/2 users discuss the best brands to buy, help one another debug a technical problem, and occasionally discuss the computing community of which OS/2 is a part.

To join the list, fill out the form at [www.possi.org/lists.html](http://www.possi.org/lists.html).

While there's no requirement that participants be a member of the Society, it's generally expected that the people who use the service will support it financially. ☺



# Coming events

A list of events scheduled by the Phoenix OS/2 Society and other OS/2 user groups.

## December 2000

**5** net.sig (Internet SIG) and HOW GIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Sam MacDonald. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

**5** Magazine submission deadline for December/January issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

**12** General meeting.

**23** Board meeting.

December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## January 2001

**2** net.sig (Internet SIG) and HOW GIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Sam MacDonald. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

**9** General meeting.

**27** Board meeting.

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## February 2001

**5** Magazine submission deadline for March issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

**6** net.sig (Internet SIG) and HOW GIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Sam MacDonald. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

**13** General meeting.

**24** Board meeting.

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

## March 2001

**5** Magazine submission deadline for April issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

**6** net.sig (Internet SIG) and HOW GIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Sam MacDonald. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

**13** General meeting.

March						
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**24** Board meeting.

## April 2001

**3** net.sig (Internet SIG) and HOW GIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Sam MacDonald. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

**5** Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

**10** General meeting.

**28** Board meeting.

April						
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29	30					

## May 2001

**1** net.sig (Internet SIG) and HOW GIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Sam MacDonald. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

**5** Magazine submission deadline for June issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

**8** General meeting.

**30** Board meeting.

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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27	28	29	30	31		

## June 2001

**5** net.sig (Internet SIG) and HOW GIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Sam MacDonald. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

**5** Magazine submission deadline for July/August issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

**12** General meeting.

**23** Board meeting.

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30



# Meeting locations

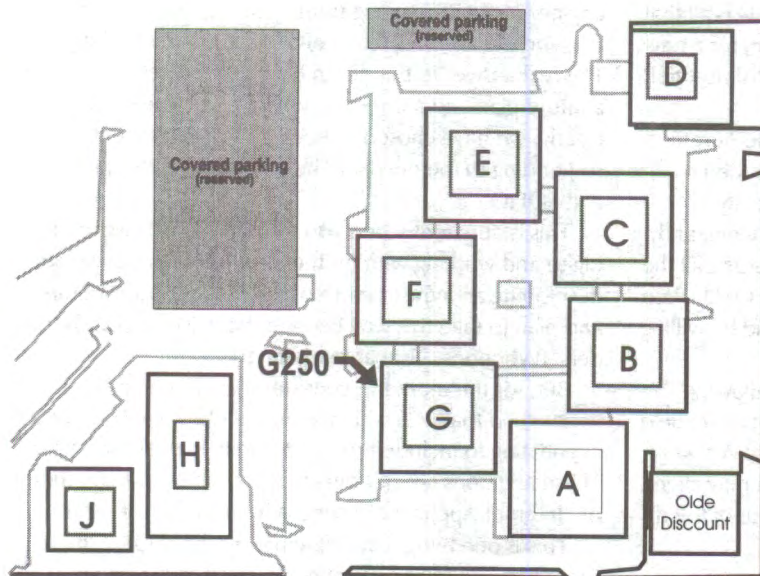
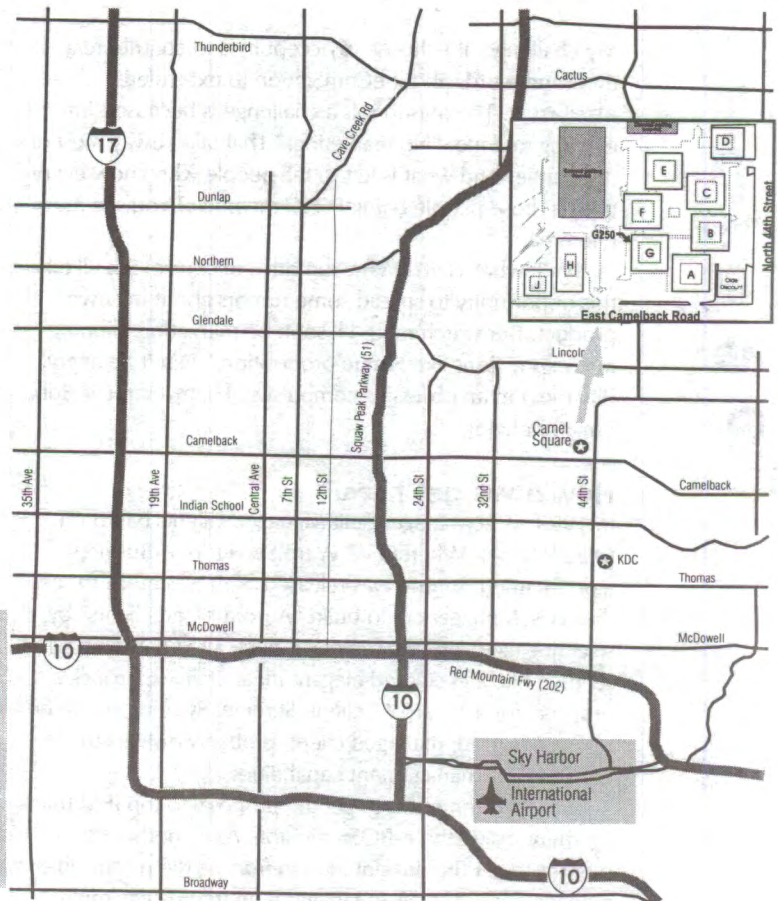
*Directions to meeting locations.*

General meetings are held at the Camel Square office complex, Room G250, 44th Street and Camelback (northwest corner), Phoenix.

From the Red Mountain Freeway (202), exit at 44th Street and go north  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles. From the Squaw Peak (51), exit at Colter (southbound) or Highland (northbound); follow signs to Camelback Rd and go east  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles.

The "How OS/2 Works General Interest Group" and the Internet SIG (net.sig) meet at Knowledge Development Center, 2999 N 44th St, Suite 400. That's just north of Thomas, in the building with the green dome. Plenty of free parking is available in the garage behind the building. ☺

If the mailing label on the back cover says "sample" then this may be the only copy of *extended attributes* that you will ever receive. If you want to keep getting the magazine (and receive all the other benefits of membership), you must join! A 12 month membership in the USA is only \$30. (See the form for membership pricing in other areas.) Tear out the application, fill it in, and mail it with your membership fee today!



North 44th Street

A map of Camel Square, the new location for the Society's monthly general meeting. We will be meeting in room G250. You may park anywhere except in the reserved (covered) parking spaces.

East Camelback Road



# What the heck is eComStation?

by Bob St. John, Director of New Business Development, Serenity Systems International

My challenge, if I choose to accept it, is to contribute a thousand words about eComStation to *extended attributes*. The reason it is a challenge is because Kim Cheung told me, "No marketing!" That takes away most of my prattle. And what is left to tell people who know everything? Those people being *POSSI* members? You see my dilemma.

Well, what's left?! Why, rumors... of course! So, I'll take this opportunity to spread some rumors about my own product. But watch me... I'll soon be marketing, slipping into expressions like "value proposition." Don't be angry. Pity me. I'm an obsessive compulsive. Hi, my name is Bob. I'm a marketer.

## How'd we get here?

In 1999, WiseManager built Managed Clients based on OS/2 Warp 4. When OS/2 Warp Server for e-Business (code-named Aurora) was released, Kim was quick to see that WiseManager could build "Aurora based clients" by selecting files from the server product, already running. It seemed like a clean and elegant idea. Unlike Stardock's proposal for a "Warp 5" client, Serenity Systems was to be a server booted, managed client, probably diskless to enhance the management capabilities.

It took four months to get the proposal to top IBM management inside the e-BOSS division. And another five months to get the presentation in front of the responsible management. But WiseManager is an impressive implementation. Once we finally had the meeting, it was all that was needed to reach an agreement (in principle) for a new IBM OS/2 based client distributed by an OEM. Almost that simple.

However, there was a wrinkle. Instead of the Aurora files, IBM asked if we would consider using the Merlin Convenience Pack (MCP), which was only recently announced. (Merlin was OS/2 Warp 4's code name, and I have a hard time letting go of it.) The point was that all the products were going to be converged onto one OS/2 Warp kernel, and IBM would appreciate it if we would be willing to use the MCP for a client.

I suspect there was some thought given to allowing another vendor to walk through the new product minefield ahead of IBM, but we weren't going to quibble. We were able to leave the room with an agreement for a new client. That had been our objective. It's good to get out of town once you've met your objective. And we did.

## Network independent client

Using the MCP opened up the possibility of a "network independent client." While it was (and is) our intention to produce a managed client, we now had to consider if we wanted to extend our products. Should we take a system which did not always have a network connection available, and deliver the same Managed Client functionality which is available with WiseManager?

eComStation (e-commerce workstation) is the result. A Mobile Managed Client, supporting a new function available in WiseMachine, baby brother to WiseManager. Admittedly, we are at square 0.9 as I write this, but users can already see the managed client functionality emerging. Ask any Preview user who has used WiseMachine to "deploy" an application or to apply fixpacks.

Serenity Systems is positioning eComStation as the premier Tier 1 client in an Internet driven, e-commerce environment. I won't spend any time on this positioning ... it would be a slippery slope to marketing spin. Simply put, e-commerce is driving the Internet, and the Internet is driving the current computing model. So, we want to be in the middle of that, and OS/2—er, that is, eCS—fits that role very well.

What is eComStation? You can find some material at our (under construction) Web sites, [www.ecomstation.com](http://www.ecomstation.com) and [www.ecomstation.nl](http://www.ecomstation.nl). Briefly, it runs on the platform of the Merlin Convenience Pack, and IBM Web sites will provide information about that; the MCP is our application engine. That tells existing users a lot, but not everything.

Where does OS/2 leave off and eComStation begin? The real answer to this lies in the future direction. eCS has a future plan and a direction which is not linear. But, clearly, we have chosen to begin our development by responding to the needs of the existing OS/2 home user and SOHO.

This is apparent when you examine whom we are talking to and working with on the eCS Preview. But we are developing an infrastructure of resellers and distributors and plan to take this way beyond the existing OS/2 borders. (Whooops... is that marketing?)

But, for the moment, consider that we recently announced that eCS will include the OS/2 Toolkit. We are negotiating to include the OS/2 Device Driver Kit (DDK). These additions are not directed at business desktop users or "Internet Appliance" users. Who is the target user?

This is one thing that is fascinating about OS/2. It can run the gamut from an embedded system running in devices like ATMs, thin clients, business desktops, power



users, hobbyists, SOHO, international enterprise accounts. OS/2 fits into each of these environments extremely well. So we see multiple opportunities for deploying eCS. Delivering on the promise of OS/2.

Our immediate target is the existing OS/2 user. To that user, we bring the latest OS/2 client technology, the MCP. More importantly, we bring the presence of a vendor who wants the business and is committed to improving the product and is willing to allow these users to participate in that development.

We continue to demonstrate interest in enhancing the multimedia function. We are having discussions with IBM about how this might be done. The same is true for the GUI and some other items. We are also exploring how to best bring a DVD player to the eCS (OS/2) community.

So, what is eComStation... well, it's a plan to continue to deliver on the promise of OS/2. A very real plan. ☺

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# Some observations on backing up

by Brian Crawburg

experience

I've been using Computer Data Strategies' Back Again/2 for several years, and recently upgraded to Back Again/2000. What I thought was going to be a life saver recently turned out to be a 500 pound anchor!

Perhaps you can learn a few troubleshooting tips from my experience—and maybe tell me how I could have solved the problem sooner!

## The road to ruin

I have several partitions on my system, and I back up three of them every weekday evening. I keep a separate tape for Monday through Thursday, and three Friday tapes (1&4, 3, 2&5). On several occasions, I've had to restore a data file that I messed up while I was working on it.

It's Tuesday afternoon, and I've installed the Win32s program, hoping that I could run a couple of Win32 programs through Win-OS/2. That attempt didn't work, so I posted a question about it to the POSSI online message group. Someone suggested that I may need to reinstall Win-OS/2, so I did so on Wednesday morning.

Well, reinstalling not only didn't help, but it changed the screen resolution in Win-OS/2, made WordPro act funny, and messed up my PMMail folder icons. Another post to the group. On Wednesday afternoon I received a reply advising me to uninstall and reinstall the video card driver. That sounded good, so I did so—except I didn't follow the directions quite right, and instead of uninstalling my driver I just reinstalled it. When I rebooted, nothing worked right.

At that point I realized the best solution was to just restore my entire D: drive (where OS/2 and all my OS/2 programs reside) using my latest tape backup. And, that is the subject of this short article.

I must have tried and retried a dozen times over the course of a day and a half to restore my D: drive. Here are the steps I took, with a summary of the failures.

## First attempt

Thursday morning. I reformatted the D: drive and, using the disaster diskettes I made when I installed Back Again/2, started a command line restoration. The disaster recovery program enables you to include and exclude drives/folders/files from the tape. Since I didn't want to overwrite my data (on drives E: and F:) I excluded those drives using `e:\*.*` and `f:\*.*`.

The restoration started, and I sat back, confident that within a hour or so I'd be back up and running. Wrong!

The process hung-up trying to restore a file after 20 or 30 minutes. (I don't remember what this file hang-up was.)

I rebooted with the utility diskettes. When I tried to begin the restoration, I got an error about not being able to access the files on the tape! I rebooted again, and looked at the D: drive—there was nothing on it. So I reformatted it and started over. This time, I got some error message about a bad tape!

I reformatted, and tried to restore using another tape. The tape seemed to always hang up when it was restoring Java11 or IBMJava. So, I tried to exclude those directories. Finally, on Friday morning, in disgust, I decided the only way this was going to work was to forget the tape.

## Success—finally

I repartitioned my drive, dividing the previous D: into two drives. I'd install only OS/2 and OS/2-related files on D:; I set it to 300MB. The remaining 2GB partition would be just applications. (I also have two Linux partitions on this drive.) My second hard disk contains my data as well as other partitions.

Then, I did a full installation of OS/2. When installing OS/2, I did not let it add installed programs to the desktop. I decided the best course of action would be to install every application.

First, though, using Back Again/2000, I restored the D: drive on the tape to the new empty E: drive. I deleted all the folders that were already on the D: drive and began reinstalling each application to the same directory. This would ensure, in most cases, that my licenses and some other files were there. I did have to reapply any updates or bug fixes (such as for UniMaint). And, I had to apply Fix-Packs and other upgrades to my OS/2 system.

Why bother with copying my old D: drive to the new E: drive? First, as I've already stated, it kept most of my licenses intact. Second, there were several small applications that had an install program in the folder, for which I had no other copy. I would have had to go find them on the net and download them again. Lesson learned: Save a copy of the zip or exe file for downloaded applications on another partition!

I'm not sure what the problem was with Back Again/2000 in the inability to restore my full D: drive from the command line. It may not have anything to do with BackAgain/2000 at all. I hope someone from CDS reads this article and comments for us all. It may have had something to do with trying to restore one drive from a tape that



had three drives stored on it. That's why I'm now keeping one tape with just the system files on it.

I learned two very crucial lessons from this experience:

- Put the operating system and those files directly related to it (i.e., IBMLAN) in its own partition
- Have a separate tape just for that partition, and use it whenever changes are

made to the operating system (such as installing a new application).

Putting everything on the same tape makes system restoration more complicated. I

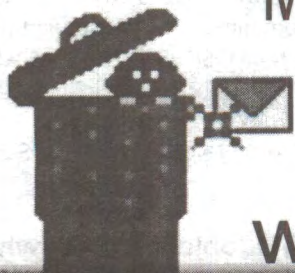
think my restoration would have been faster and smoother if my system had been set up in this manner.

A final step I'm taking is to keep a copy of my CONFIG.SYS and IBMLAN.INI on the E: drive. ☺

Brian Grawburg (grawburg@bbnp.com) is an OS/2 user of over six years, and is a LAN Administrator for a small (<100 employees) furniture and furniture accessories importer/manufacture. He occasionally does consulting for a company that has several OS/2 machines in a peer-to-peer network.

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# OS/2: object lesson

by John Angelico

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feature

OS/2 seems to be a little like Mark Twain, the American author, who wrote to the editor of a large daily newspaper protesting, "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated!" OS/2 shares his nationality, but judging by the lack of coverage, one could be forgiven for thinking that everyone has forgotten the existence of OS/2.

However, it is still the operating system of choice on many computers, working without too much fuss, supporting many mission-critical operations—especially in our financial system. About 75% of Australian ATMs operate under the control of OS/2, along with much of the front counter equipment in the branches of our major and regional banks. Also, at the recent Sydney Olympics, OS/2 controlled most of the PCs operating as touch-screen information kiosks both for public viewing and for specialist functions such as media information outlets.

## Some operating system history

The software industry and operating systems were "invented," or took on a distinct existence, in the late 1960s to early 1970s, as a result of the IBM antitrust case and the subsequent consent decree with the Department of Justice. Since then, the computer industry has seen a steady movement away from intense dependence on hardware. This began with the development of programming languages and gathered pace as the hegemony of main-frame computers was attacked, first by minicomputers and then by personal computers, both of the Apple and the IBM-compatible variety.

The general approach was to remove from users and applications any need to understand the details of the hardware they were working with. This process of abstraction continues today with the Web-based Java language and the entire concept of network computing.

As hardware proliferated, software developers were overwhelmed by the need to cope with the variety. Wordsmiths from the DOS era will recall that prominent WordPerfect selling point "support for over 700 printers!" Therefore, manufacturers and systems developers put a lot of effort into writing device drivers and similar middleware to ease the burden, and the abstraction process advanced another step.

With the Internet, abstraction advanced again, so that by using standard TCP/IP communication protocols we can retrieve data and communicate worldwide. We need have no regard for the brand-name or operating characteristics of the equipment anywhere in the chain linking our hum-

ble PC with the server which is the source of our Web pages or the file we download.

## DOS is dead, long live OS/2!

In 1985, IBM and Microsoft were still the two biggest names in 16-bit Intel-based personal computing. They began a joint project to fix the problems of the MS/PC-DOS operating environment. "What problems?" you ask? Wasn't DOS just fine for PCs? Well, consider these:

- Single-tasking "cooperative" operating model
- Vulnerability of critical system areas to corruption (via rogue programs, viruses, mains power problems, breaches of the 640Kb memory limit etc)
- Device compatibility & dependence
- File system limitations (e.g. FAT = FAT12 was originally devised for floppies)
- Hardware developments exhausting DOS capacity (32-bit processors, new devices)
- User interface, training and productivity issues caused by programming diversity.

The result of that project was OS/2, first released in 1989. OS/2 2.0 was released in 1991 with a graphical interface, OS/2 Warp version 3 in 1993 with expanded 32-bit processing, extensive 32-bit driver support, and broader networking functions. The current release, OS/2 Warp version 4, came in 1996 with voice navigation, voice dictation and Internet connectivity. Since then, the computer industry has focused most of its attention on a love affair with the Internet.

IBM has concentrated on releasing FixPacks and device driver updates to keep abreast of developments. There are up to date OS/2 device drivers for USB, DVD, Zip drives, the latest high-capacity hard drives (both IDE and SCSI), the latest printers, cable modems, network cards, plotters, analogue modems and video cards.

OS/2 has been a solid operating platform for all of its existence, and is now the seasoned warrior in the world of mission-critical computing, with an assured future ahead, since IBM has publicly committed to active support until the end of 2007. By that time OS/2 will have reached age eighteen and "outlived" many more tangible things—like the cars on our roads!

Table 1 summarizes the achievements of the OS/2 design.

## The power of OS/2: objects everywhere!

One of the reasons for the survival of OS/2 and the existence of a loyal (dare I say it: fanatical) user base both in



**Table 1 DOS problems vs OS/2 solutions**

<b>DOS Problem</b>	<b>OS/2 Solution</b>
Single tasking OS & risk of runaway programs	Preemptive multitasking OS and more rigorous checking of devices and resources
Operating system vulnerabilities (including virus threats)	"Continuous" memory model; OS control of memory & locking of all critical files
Device compatibility & dependence	Device independence equivalent to mainframe OSs
File system limitations	New File System (HPFS) & Installable File System Concept
Hardware advances	Device Driver development; Online Device Driver web site
User interface issues	CUA-91 interface standard

corporate business and in the private sector is the collective set of design principles on which it is built.

OS/2 is the first retail PC Operating System to be fully object-oriented—everything you see, from the Desktop down, is an object. (Naturally, that doesn't mean it's perfect or bug-free, any more than our cars are flawless wonders of engineering which never fail, but the design is thoroughly tested, very solid and the code base is mature.)

All objects have properties—programs, data files, directory folders, the desktop, drives, and so on. These properties are consistent, and can be inherited by subsidiary objects. We will illustrate this object-oriented design in a number of areas.

The desktop has a property of "Work Area" which means that when it is closed all objects within it are also closed. This is effectively what happens at shutdown, since (in graphical mode) all objects are started from the desktop by a process called "The Workplace Shell."

This property of "Work Area" can also apply to any other folder, so if I open a subsidiary folder and run a program, then I can minimize or close the folder and automatically minimize or close the contents with it. But not only that—when I reopen the folder, the contained objects are also restored.

The enclosed objects inherit the attributes or properties of the container

folder and behave consistently. All the objects open together—multitasking for productivity. If your work is project focused, you can establish a folder for each project, include all relevant programs and files, define it as a Work Area and get to work with a double mouse-click.

### **Shadows**

Folders can, of course, be buried anywhere in the tree structure of a hard drive. If I create a shadow of a folder (similar to a link in Windows) on the desktop, I can access its contents more quickly. I can create a shadow in a couple of ways: with a right-click to access the folder popup menu, or by a "single click and drag" to the destination while holding Ctrl+Shift.

The shadow now has its own object identity and remains distinct from the original. Its function is to accept any actions (clicks, double-clicks, changes to properties, etc.) and have them apply to the original (and vice versa) to reflect actions performed on the original. That is, OS/2 maintains a two-way connection between the shadow and its original. The shadow can be deleted without affecting the original, but because it has a subsidiary function to point back to its original, if the original is deleted, logically the shadow is deleted with it.

The shadow dynamically retains its two-way connection, even if the original is moved. So, I can go to the original location of a folder and move it, say, from Drive H:

to Drive G:. If I return to the desktop and click on the shadow to reopen the folder, it now points to the new location, and all objects within the folder are accessible and functional.

### **Program references**

I can create an object which refers to a program, known in OS/2 as a "program reference object." On the desktop, I may have such an object which refers to, say, my accounting program, which happens to be a Windows application. Using the DOS and Windows support built into OS/2, I can assign certain features to its runtime environment, select the Autoexec.Bat file which runs when the program starts, and assign command line parameters to the object. I can also keep all of these distinct from those same attributes which apply directly to the program (executable file) itself. The example object on the Desktop is labelled "Pastel 5H" but the executable program name is actually "Pastel5.exe."

I can create another object, referencing that same program, to operate slightly differently, for example, giving it the title "Accounts—Last Year" and setting command line options for the program to automatically start with last year's figures. I can also go to a folder, find another program and create a new object on the desktop. The program object is automatically assigned a default set of properties, according to its nature (OS/2, Windows or DOS



program). I can double click on that object to run the program, and it will appear to behave exactly as if I had directly started the actual .EXE file or had typed its name at the command line, DOS-style. Finally, I can delete the object from the desktop when I am done, without risking loss of the actual program.

### **Fax freedom**

This object concept applies even to transient entities such as print jobs. Every printer device in OS/2 handles print jobs as objects. A fax device with attributes to transmit output files as faxes may be built as a print object and will appear in the list of printers available to all native OS/2 programs.

But even DOS and Windows programs which have never been built to recognize a fax device or a modem may be Fax-enabled. When the native OS/2 fax application, Faxworks, is registered upon installation, logical device LPT3 (another object) is established as a source of fax jobs.

So, I can go to my venerable and trusty DOS database program (PC-File), prepare a report and print it to LPT3. As soon as the print job is closed, Faxworks collects it from LPT3 (which has been assigned the attribute of "Fax") and spools it for faxing, exactly the same as if it had come from a native OS/2 program which recognizes the fax device.

### **Multiple attributes, multiple purposes**

Data files are another form of discrete object to OS/2, with particular attributes reflecting the fact that they are used as the "raw material" for application programs.

Any object can be turned into a template for use in creating new copies. The properties Icon panel has a check-box, "Template." When that is checked, the icon appearance becomes a yellow pad (almost like a Post-It notepad) to reflect its new capabilities. With a right-click and drag, I can peel off a new copy from the original, and drop it on the desktop.

The template and the new copy are identical but distinct, and the new copy has a new name. The properties of the data file include a definition of one or more of a list of file types. With each type may be associated one or more programs which use that file type. For example, one file may have the type HTML plus the type Plain Text. It may thus be viewed as a text file using say the System Editor, or as a Web page using Netscape, Web Explorer or another browser. Or, the page may be edited using a HTML editor or Web page creation program. The file is not restricted to being assigned exclusively to one particular program.

The available file types are accessible in a program (using its properties associations panel) and any number of programs may be associated with a file type. We may also associate a program to a file by its file name or extension.

### **Desktop extensions**

Because of the robust and flexible OS/2 design, third party developers are allowed (within normal programming limits) to build extensions to the desktop environment which add to or modify desktop functions. Some of the mouse functions available (from eight pages of options) in my favourite utility, NPSWPS, include:

- "Pointer wrapping at screen borders (vertical and horizontal)" allows me to move the pointer anywhere on the screen with minimal hand movement

- "Shift pointer to focus/activate window at pointer" allows me to move the pointer to a new window and without a click that window becomes active
- "Automatic menu selection:" if a window becomes active by program action, the pointer automatically goes to the window and to the default button if applicable

### **May Warp be with you!**

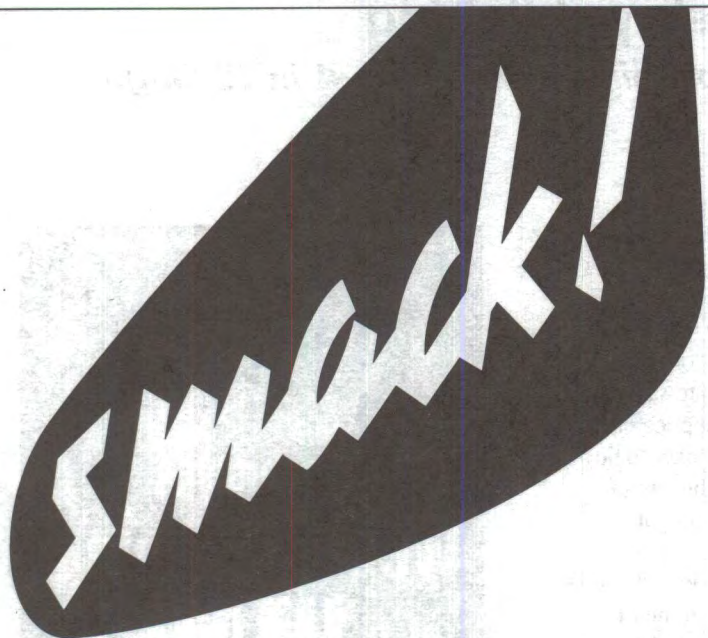
OS/2 is a clear demonstration that "object-oriented" is a not merely a buzzword. It has been brought out of the clouds, and applied to real-life situations. Indeed: "OS/2 = Objects Everywhere." About the only objects you won't find on an OS/2 system are named "Melissa," "ILuvU," "Concept.VBS" and similar.

OS/2 offers power, productivity and stability, which is not about to disappear anytime soon.

If you want to experience more of the power of OS/2, the SIG meets on the fourth Tuesday each month. If you think you might like to try OS/2, we will be only too pleased to help you install it from your Australian Personal Computer July cover CD. ☺

John Angelico CPA is Co-Convener of the Melbourne PC user group's OS/2 SIG, and has been operating OS/2 in the family business since 1993. He welcomes responses via [talldad@kep1.com.au](mailto:talldad@kep1.com.au) or the MelbPC Office.





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# Learn HTML and Web publishing

## *Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML 4 in 21 Days*

by Craig Greenwood

The second edition of *Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML 4* weighs in with 1191 pages, including Appendixes and a comprehensive index. Yet, I think it's a must for a "reference edition" for HTML coders.

The book conforms to the format of SAMS' other "Teach Yourself" titles, as it's broken up into bite-sized lessons. (This book actually has 30 lessons for the price of 21—for those who really enjoy a bargain.) You have to be a serious student to get through this volume at the rate of one lesson per day, though, as many chapters are rather meaty.

Each lesson has a presentation of information, followed by several exercises so you may apply that information. Finishing off each lesson is a Workshop with several review questions (with answers, fortunately), a quiz (with answers) and a few follow-up exercises to really cement what was taught.

### **Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML 4 in 21 Days**

by Laura Lemay  
\$49.95

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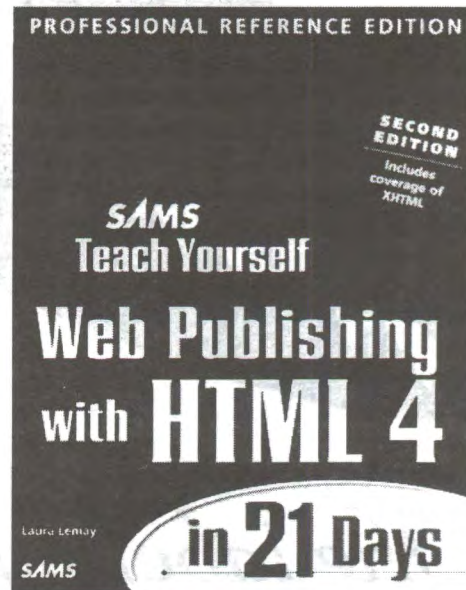
The book is subdivided into ten parts, each made up of three lessons. New to this edition is coverage of XHTML. Among the general subjects are Web Graphics; Style Sheets, Tables, and Frames; Multimedia and Java Applets; and Setting Up and Administering a Web Server.

The author did a reasonable job of not promoting one browser over the other, and she even makes a point of explaining when a given HTML standard is unsupported, so the student can make a multi-platform friendly Web site, if they so desire.

### **Bonuses**

Eight appendixes make up the last fifth of the book. Among other subjects, they include an HTML 4.0 quick reference, a cross-browser reference table (which shows browser compatibility of tags and attributes), and a Cascading Style Sheet quick reference.

A companion Web site is essentially an expanded list of the Sources for Further Information appendix, but with clickable links. This sure beats typing in those lengthy URLs, some of which are longer than one line on a page.



And, what HTML reference book would be complete without a companion CD? This disk has a bunch of tools for Web page authoring, code editing, graphics, and programming—all for either Windows or Macintosh, nothing for OS/2. The one thing you might find useful is the graphics library, which contains royalty-free photos.

Web Publishing with HTML 4 has a well thought out layout that is easy to navigate. While the content covers the subject thoroughly, beginners could glean much useful information without having to slog through technical aspects they are not ready for. Even if you don't go through this book as a course, it is a great reference for someone who wants to know the essential code amidst a world of not-so-lean Web sites created with WYSIWYG web page programs. It is on my "regularly used" book shelf, and is highly recommended for budding Web authors as well as experienced ones. ☺



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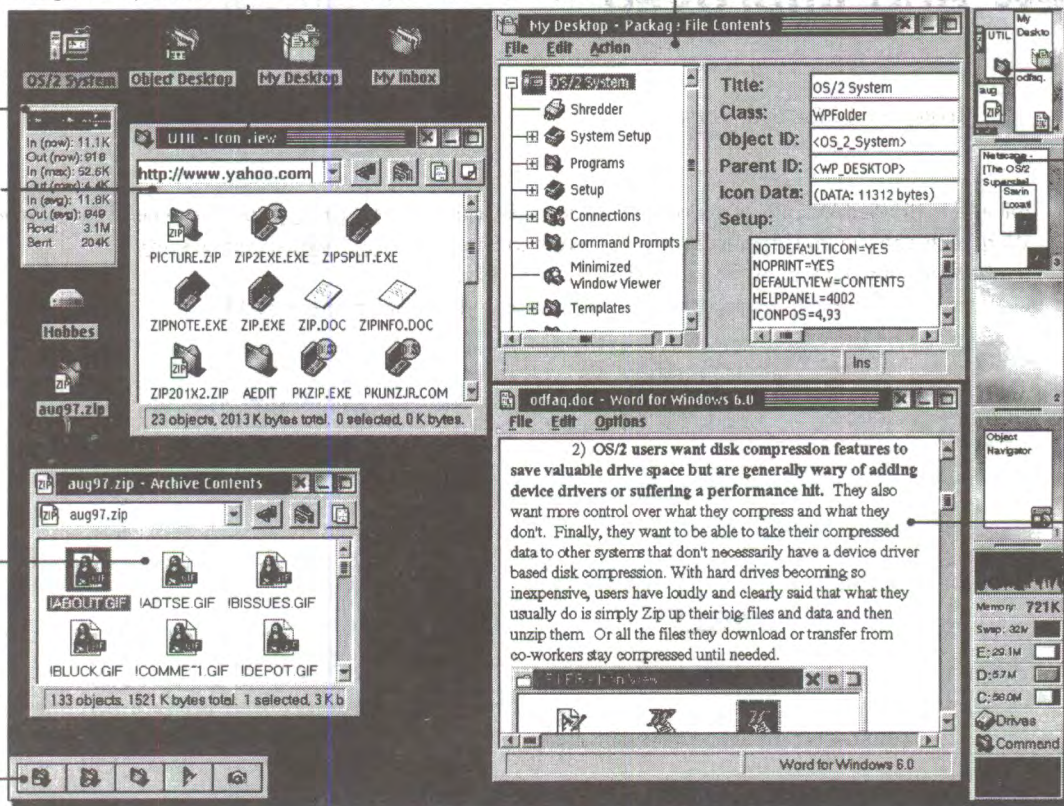
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# New and improved

compiled by Esther Schindler

Bill and I attended Warpstock Europe in October. As with WarpTech and the Philadelphia Warpstock event in September, the all-volunteer event featured an exhibit hall as well as excellent technical sessions. It was instructive and fun to meet the OS/2 vendors in the European community—including some I'd never heard of. While they don't always have announcements that appear in this regular update list, it's a delight to discover OS/2 applications I'd never before encountered.

## Sundial product forums

Sundial Systems has added product forums to its Internet site. Mesa 2, DBExpert, Relish, Clearlook, Rover Pack, and Junk Spy each have their own discussion forum, which can be accessed directly as a newsgroup or sent-and-received as email.

Sundial's technical support staff monitor the product forums to assist and provide information as appropriate. The forums will also be used by technical support to post information about product feature and usage issues that have come to their attention through other support means.

Access the newsgroups or subscribe to email messages on the Product Forums page at [www.sundialsystems.com/forums.html](http://www.sundialsystems.com/forums.html).

## SysInfo/2

SysInfo/2, a utility to measure and report what's happening in your OS/2 system, has been updated to version 0.70.

This version adds new video devices and introduces benchmarking for CPU and file system input/output.

You can download SysInfo/2 from the project home page at <http://os2.ru/projects/sysinfo/indexeng.shtml>.

## cURL

TEAM OS/2 Russia released an OS/2 port of curl-7.3. Curl is a tool for getting a file using URL syntax. Version 7.3 supports http, ftp, dict, telnet, https, LDAP, file and gopher. (This port does not yet support https and LDAP.)

You can find the program at <http://teamos2.ru/files/curl-7.3-emx.zip>.

## WarpCD

WarpCD v0.2.0 is a CD-player which uses the WinAmp skins to change its appearance. Because it uses the IOCtrl interface, it doesn't need MMOS2.

Full source is provided. You can find the necessary files at [www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Sector/5785](http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Sector/5785)

[/index.html](#). You'll also need the Warpin installer, from <http://warpin.netlabs.org>.

## VyperHelp 1.11

Mat Kramer ([mek@compuserve.com](mailto:mek@compuserve.com)) released VyperHelp 1.11, a visual outliner and editor for creating online help for OS/2, WinHelp, and HTML systems. A command-line conversion program is included, which allows conversion to and from OS/2 help and WinHelp, and to HTML, HTMLHelp, and RTF printable output.

The new version adds output and conversion to HTML (single file, framed and HTMLHelp), bitmap support, and the ability to import a C header file with an IPF file.

Registration is \$49. To download VyperHelp, see [www.vyperhelp.com](http://www.vyperhelp.com).

## NetDrive for OS/2

Blueprint Software Works, Inc. has updated NetDrive for OS/2 to release 1.0.1. NetDrive is a virtual file system that allows users to mount an FTP site or a local directory or a network resource to a virtual volume.

The new version adds additional REXX support, enhances the registration script, and adds functionality to the ftp resource.

You can download the new version can be downloaded from <ftp://ftp.bmtmicro.com/bmtmicro/netdrive/ndfsv10.zip>.

## GNU Barcode port

With all the interest in barcodes generated by the free availability of :CueCat barcode scanners at Radio Shack and other sources, Mark Crocker ([mcrocker@micron.net](mailto:mcrocker@micron.net)) thought it might be a good idea to compile GNU Barcode 0.95 on OS/2.

GNU Barcode 0.95 is a free barcode printing program which produces PostScript output suitable for use with Ghostscript. GNU Barcode supports a wide range of barcode formats including UPC, EAN, ISBN, Code39, Code128 and others. According to the author, the :CueCat can process all of these formats, assuming your printer is good enough to render them clearly.

Source code, libraries, and executables for GNU Barcode 0.95 are available from <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/graphics/barcode-095.zip>.

## PMNapster 2.5

Napster's music service enables users to locate and share music files from one interface. It also provides community



members with a vehicle to identify new artists and a forum to communicate their interests and tastes with one another via instant messaging, chat rooms, and Hot List user bookmarks.

An OS/2 version of the Napster client, PMNapster 2.5 Release 3, is now available on Hobbes. It requires OS/2 Warp 4 with Fixpak 12, an HPFS or JFS partition, and VROBJ.DLL (also on Hobbes). It's at <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/internet/misc/pmnaster25r3.zip>. This version updates the "default" section in the configuration file, and corrects logon errors.

### StockMarket/2 v1.8

Dimitris 'sehh' Michelinakis ([sehh@altered.com](mailto:sehh@altered.com)) released version 1.8 of his StockMarket/2 program, a utility that monitors stocks over the Internet. This new version adds resizable windows and support for stocks with zero values (such as funds and pre-IPO stocks). You can find the file at [www.michelinakis.gr/Dimitris/files/stockmarket18.zip](http://www.michelinakis.gr/Dimitris/files/stockmarket18.zip).

### New JFS fix

IBM has updated JFS, in a file dated October 9. This fix includes a new UJFS.DLL. Find it at <ftp://service.boulder.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/fixes/v4.5warp/jfs1009.zip>.

### Update CD I.O

Update CD 1.0, which was introduced at

WarpStock Europe 2000, is available.

Update CD can be used to integrate IBM fixes and updates with your original OS/2 Warp 4 CD-ROM, creating an updated OS/2 Warp client.

This version updates the syslevel files, fixes the PEER icon installation problem, and enables you to install third-party products (DANI IDE, FAT32, SDD drivers, etc.) with OS/2 Warp. You'll find Update CD at <http://xenia.sote.hu/~kadzso1/rexx/sajat/updcd.htm>.

### Digitize2

Digitize2 lets you digitize and measure distances in an image, using your mouse. You can zoom in and pan around the expanded image. Digitize2 can be used to convert old technical data published in journals to a digital form, as well as to digitize maps.

Digitize2 addresses the special problems inherent in this type of work. First, it is rather easy to scan the printed material, but getting it aligned accurately is a nuisance. Second, many scanners and certainly most xerographic reproductions are not uniformly scaled. Therefore, Digitize2 by default corrects for rotated images and it does a linear correction for scale distortions.

Digitize2 allows you to edit the image. This is done automatically during digitizing, or using the various paint tools available. This can greatly simplify keeping track of progress when working on complex imag-

ery. Finally, you can move digitized points, link to existing lines and generate smoothed lines using a very powerful bspline algorithm.

The output is ASCII. A DXF and IDRISI export facility is also provided.

This release incorporates smoothing and resampling based on parametric bsplines. It also uses the SFX installer.

The author, Doug Rickman ([doug@hotrocks.msfc.nasa.gov](mailto:doug@hotrocks.msfc.nasa.gov)), uploaded the latest version version of Digitize2 in Hobbes, and the source code should be found there as well, at <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/graphics/scan/Digitize320.zip>.

### WarpIN

WarpIN has been updated to version 0.9.5. WarpIN, a universal OS/2 software installer, is becoming increasingly popular among OS/2 developers because of its flexibility and ease of use. It has full system configuration (CONFIG.SYS, WPS classes, WPS objects) and can fully undo all the changes to your system again. This is mainly a maintenance release.

For detailed information and download addresses, see <http://www2.rz.hu-berlin.de/~h0444vnd/os2.html>.

### XWorkplace

XWorkplace is an open-source Workplace Shell enhancer. XWorkplace is the succes-



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son to my popular XFolder utility and has become a Netlabs project. XWorkplace has been updated to V0.9.5.

XFolder now has a trash can, more CONFIG.SYS settings, most of the features of WarpEnhancer, mouse-button-3 scrolling, improved WPS notebook settings pages, a much better "WPS Class List," full sound schemes support in the "Sound" object, and more.

For detailed information and download addresses, see <http://www2.rz.hu-berlin.de/~h0444v nd/os2.html>.

WarpIN and XWorkplace are Netlabs projects, released under the GNU General Public Licence. The source code is available on the Netlabs CVS server. See [www.netlabs.org/nosa](http://www.netlabs.org/nosa) for details.

### ZOC 3.15

Emtec released version 3.15 of its Zap-O-Comm terminal program. ZOC is an award

winning modem, telnet/SSH and ISDN comm. application for OS/2 and Windows 95/98/NT. It supports VT102/VT220, CIS-B protocol, and Zmodem. ZOC has a scroll-back buffer, an online GIF/JPG viewer, REXX scripting, named pipes and many other features.

ZOC, which received the OS/2 Magazine Editor's Choice in 1995, and Inside OS/2 User's Choice in 1994 and 1995, can be found at [www.emtec.com/zoc/index.htm](http://www.emtec.com/zoc/index.htm). Registration (for all versions) is \$69.

### Word to HTML 0.6 released

TeamOS2 Russia has updated version 0.60 of a conversion program that translates Microsoft Word files into HTML. It's at <http://teamos2.ru/files/wv-0.6-emx.zip>.

### VolDep

Timo Maier ([tam@gmx.de](mailto:tam@gmx.de)) released VolDep, a text-mode stock manager for OS/2. Cur-

rently, the documentation and program are in German only, but the author suggests that the program should work for non-German speakers.

VolDep is freeware. Find it at <http://home.sampo.de/homepages/thunder/bin/voldep.zip>.

### ResumeMaker.com

ResumeMaker.com has a new online resume builder which may assist job seekers in creating, improving and storing resumes online. Previously available only as software, [ResumeMaker.com](http://ResumeMaker.com) helps job seekers create professional resumes via the Internet. ResumeMaker.com assists job seekers with creating a better resume. The result is a better resume that the company claims positions job seekers for a better job. Registration appears to be free. ☺

## Tips and tricks: Making AWGet server based

by Bart van Leeuwen

GNU WGet is a freely available network utility to retrieve files from the World Wide Web using HTTP and FTP, the two most widely used Internet protocols. It works non-interactively, thus enabling work in the background, after having logged off. You can find WGet at <http://www.gnu.org/gnulist/production/wget.html>.

Auto WGet (AWGet) is an add-on to WGet that looks into the "ToDo" folder and launches WGet when any file appears to be there. Basically, awget (available at <http://glass.os2.spb.ru/software/english/awget.html>) gives you drag and drop convenience with Wget's power.

However, both utilities are limited, because they aren't especially network aware. Plus, because some downloads can take a long time, you can't shut down your system while those tasks are running. If you're a developer, that can be inconvenient. So, here's a way to implement cross-network downloading using AWGet, Wget, the emx runtime libraries, and Warp Peer Services.

The goal is that when you start a download, it'll actually happen on a second machine,—which we'll call the download server—instead of on your workstation. Here's how to set it up:

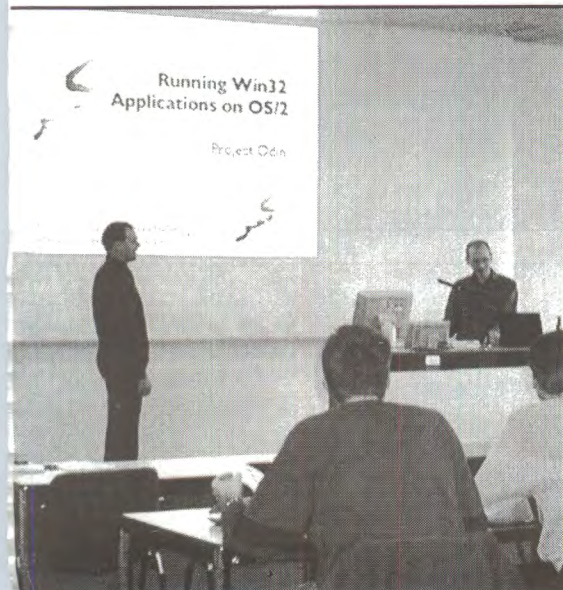
- Make sure your network is set up and running okay.
- Install AWGet on the computer you intend to use as the download server. Install WGet and emx on it, too.
- Create a share on the download server from its AWGet directory.
- Now, go over to your desktop PC. From the Warp 4 Connections folder, create a shadow on your desktop from the ToDo folder on the download server.
- Now, when you now drag a URL from Netscape into that folder, the file download will start on your server instead of on the workstation.

I hope this tip is helpful! ☺





# Warpstock Europe 2000





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